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## The Recreational Activities Of Rural Youth In Waller County, Texas

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THE  
RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES  
OF  
RURAL YOUTH IN  
WALLER COUNTY, TEXAS, 1939

(THESIS)

FRIEDA ESTELLE RHONE

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THE RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF RURAL YOUTH  
IN WALLER COUNTY, TEXAS

By

FRIEDA ESTELLE RHONE

A THESIS IN RURAL SOCIOLOGY

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT

FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF SCIENCE

IN THE

GRADUATE DIVISION

OF

PRAIRIE VIEW STATE NORMAL AND INDUSTRIAL COLLEGE

PRAIRIE VIEW, TEXAS

August, 1939

## B I O G R A P H Y

Frieda Estelle Rhone was born March 1, 1919 at Chandler, Texas. She is the youngest daughter of two children of F. G. Rhone and the late Lita Lewis Rhone. During the first seven years of her life, she lived with her maternal grandmother and with an aunt in Athens, Texas. In the meantime, her parents moved to Prairie View State College where her father was employed, and at the age of seven she came to Prairie View to live with her parents. This was the first time she had ever lived with them.

When she had been in Prairie View for five months she went to Waco to visit another aunt. She liked the town so well, she lived with this aunt for two years. An automobile accident terminated her stay in Waco, and upon her recovery she returned to Prairie View to live with her parents.

Her primary and elementary school work was done in Athens, Waco, and Prairie View. She finished elementary school at Prairie View and entered the high school department of the Prairie View Training School in September, 1931.

She was graduated from high school in May, 1934 and in September, 1934 she entered Prairie View State College, where she took a course in Arts and Sciences with a major in chemistry. She was graduated from Prairie View State College in May, 1938.



While in college, Frieda Rhone was the only girl majoring in chemistry. This fact made her college life very eventful. She was active in the Scientific Society, the Dramatic Club, the Literary Society, and was a member of the Varsity Tennis Team.

In September, 1938 she received a scholarship and continued her study in the Graduate School at Prairie View State College, and was graduated in August, 1939, with a major in Rural Sociology and a minor in Rural Education.

Miss Rhone became interested in Sociology during her senior year in college and changed her field from Chemistry to Rural Sociology when she began her graduate study. Her hobby is short story writing and when a Sophomore in college she won first prize in a creative writing contest sponsored by the Literary Society. Her ambition is to obtain the Ph. D. degree before she is twenty-five.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The writer wishes to express her appreciation to Mr. W. R. Harrison, her major professor and research director, for his assistance in preparing this thesis, and to Miss Ada Louise Evans for her help in tabulating the data. The writer also wishes to thank Dr. E. M. Norris, Professor of Rural Education, Mr. H. A. Bullock, Professor of Sociology, and Miss A. C. Preston, Professor of Rural Education, for the inspiration received while studying under them, and for their helpful criticisms in the preparation of this thesis.

## DEDICATION

To my father, Mr. F. G. Rhone, and to  
Mrs. E. B. Evans, this thesis is lovingly dedicated.

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RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF RURAL YOUTH  
IN WALLER COUNTY, TEXAS

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Scope of Investigation

This study includes 102 rural youths between the ages of 15 and 19 years in the high schools of Waller County. The names of the high schools are: Sam Schwarz, located at Hempstead; Brookshire, at Brookshire, and Bob Burton, at Sunnyside. There are three important features of the county which made possible the selection of the three high schools in the places studied: (1) Type of population; (2) Geographic location and economic features; and (3) Transportation facilities.

Waller County is rural in population and agricultural in interests. The total population in 1930 was 10,014 and the Negro population 4,952. The Negro population has been normally about 50 per cent of the total population. The county has shown a decline in population since 1910. For the total population the per cent change was a decrease of 14.8 in 1910; 15.2 in 1920, and 2.7 in 1930. The per cent change for Negroes was a decrease of 14.7 in 1910; 25.9 in 1920, and 0.3 in 1930. The period between 1880 and 1900 showed no decline in population.

The largest town is Hempstead, the county seat and the main trade area, with a population of 2,000 in 1936. The next largest

town is Brookshire, with a population of 500. Sunnyside is considered as an open country community, with a population of 100. All three of these places studied, as well as the county, have a rather stable rural population.

The county is located in the coastal prairie area in South Texas. It consists of an area of 519 square miles. It has a rolling to level topography with soil varying from black land in the Brazos River bottom to sandy loam in the prairie. Cotton, cattle, and watermelons are the primary agricultural enterprises in the county.<sup>1</sup>

The majority of the people are farmers and there were 729 Negro farm operators in the county. Table I shows the number of colored operators, land in farms, and value of land and buildings of Negroes in Waller County, 1935.

TABLE I. NUMBER OF COLORED OPERATORS, LAND IN FARMS, AND VALUE OF LANDS AND BUILDINGS OF NEGROES IN WALLER COUNTY, 1935\*

Colored Operators	Number	All Land in Farms	Value of Lands and Buildings
Full owners	133	6,888	\$ 119,260
Part owners	78	4,453	98,290
Managers	2	2,424	37,740
Croppers	225	6,551	180,721
Other Tenants	291	12,289	278,876

\*Data taken from U. S. Census of Agriculture, 1935.

There were 133 full owners having 6,886 acres of land in farms. The value of the land and buildings was \$119,260. It is clearly

<sup>1</sup> Data taken from Texas Almanac, 1936.



seen from the figures that a large number of the colored operators were in the cropper and other tenant class with a larger number of acres in farms and with a higher value of land and buildings.

Except for three highways which cross the county, the roads are poorly kept. The condition of the roads in rainy weather is such that travel is greatly retarded. This, together with the exceptionally low per capita automobile ownership, makes for a low degree of mobility for both social and economic purposes. These factors greatly discourage commercial recreation in the small trade centers. The responsibility for a great deal of recreational activities, then, is placed upon social organizations, especially the high schools in the county.

#### Statement of Problem

Sharing equal importance with the school or occupational activities of an individual are recreational activities. Recreational activities are a necessary complement to school or occupation.

Cities have a diversity of facilities for social activities with commercial agencies supplementing the programs of social organizations. It is the popular opinion that the rurals are lacking in these facilities; therefore, it is the purpose of this study to ascertain the social activities participated in by rural youth. What do they do for recreation? Where do they go? What type of activities are provided in the home? What agencies contribute to their social life?

These are some of the questions this study attempts to answer.

### Method and Procedure

The information for this study was collected by personal interviews. Inquiry forms were prepared for the study which were taken to the various schools. A half day was spent at each school. The students within the age range of 15 to 19 years were assembled and consulted, and a schedule was made for each case. Forty-eight cases were interviewed in the Sam Schwarz High School at Hempstead, twenty-one in the Bob Burton School at Sunnyside, and thirty-three in the Brookshire High School at Brookshire. The schedules were then tabulated and the information summarized.

### Previous Studies

No previous studies have been made of the recreational activities of rural Negro youth, however, other studies concerning rural youth have been made and Negroes have been included in many of them. These studies are in the form of bulletins and monographs and were conducted since 1933, the year when the depression was at its worst. Because of the seriousness of the rural problem, the Federal Government has made several studies under the W. P. A. Such studies include:

Melvin, Bruce L. - Rural Youth on Relief<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Melvin, Bruce L. - Rural Youth on Relief - Research Monograph XI, U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C., 1937.

This study is concerned with the youth from 16 to 24 years of age in relief households. The distribution and characteristics, and the use of Federal emergency agencies in assisting these young people were included in this study.

Melvin, Bruce L. and Smith, Elna N. - Rural Youth - Their Situation and Prospect<sup>3</sup> - This study is concerned with the present problems of rural youth so that a definite picture of the group may be presented. Their distribution, economic, educational, and marital status are some of the factors covered. The role of governmental agencies in assisting these youths with implications for future programs was also studied. Negroes were included in the study.

Another study conducted by the American Youth Commission is Youth Tell Their Story<sup>4</sup> by Howard M. Bell. This is a study of the attitudes of young people in Maryland between the ages of 16 to 24 years. The study was prepared by the Youth Commission of the American Council on Education. It is an analysis of the attitudes of 13,500 young people in Maryland; what they are doing and what they are thinking. The attitude of youth toward the home, school, and church; and youth at work and at play were studied. The study was primarily concerned with white youth, but Negro youth were included and the data compared.

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<sup>3</sup>Melvin, Bruce L. - Rural Youth - Their Situation and Prospect - Research Monograph, XV, U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C., 1938.

<sup>4</sup>Bell, Howard M. - Youth Tell Their Story - American Council on Education, Washington, D. C., 1938.

## CHAPTER II

### PERSONAL FAMILY AND HOME BACKGROUND

The young people included in this study were divided according to the schools they attended: Brookshire, Sunnyside, and Hempstead. Thirty-three cases were studied in Brookshire, twenty-one in Sunnyside, and forty-eight in Hempstead, which included all of the youth in high school in this age group.

Table II shows the distribution of young people by schools attended and sex.

TABLE II. DISTRIBUTION OF YOUNG PEOPLE  
BY SCHOOLS ATTENDED AND SEX

Schools Attended	Number			Per Cent		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Bob Burton	11	10	21	52.3	47.6	100
Brookshire	11	22	33	33.3	66.6	100
Sam Schwarz	26	22	48	54.2	45.8	100
All Schools Attended	48	54	102	47.2	52.8	100

Forty-eight or 47.2 per cent of the students were boys and fifty-four or 52.8 per cent of the students were girls for all of the schools studied.



Table III shows the age distribution of young people by schools.

TABLE III. AGE DISTRIBUTION OF YOUNG PEOPLE  
BY SCHOOLS

Schools	Fifteen Years	Sixteen Years	Seventeen Years	Eighteen Years	Nineteen Years	Not Stated
Sam Schwarz	15	13	8	7	2	3
Brookshire	6	9	7	-	1	10
Bob Burton	11	8	2	-	-	2
All Schools	32	30	17	7	3	15

These young people ranged from 15 to 19 years in age, with the majority 15 and 16 years of age. Fifteen young people did not state their ages, however, they were within the group studied.

Data were obtained relating to the family life of the young people studied. Information concerning the educational and occupational status of the parents was considered of importance because of their influence upon recreational activities.

Table IV shows the educational status of the parents.

TABLE IV. EDUCATIONAL STATUS OF THE PARENTS

Educational Status	Mother		Father	
	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent
Less than High School Graduate	63	55.8	60	73.2
High School graduate	29	25.7	11	13.4
College Attendance	17	15.0	6	7.3
College Graduate	4	3.5	5	6.1

The limited education of the parents proved very striking as the majority were less than high school graduates. Fifty-five and eight-tenths per cent of the mothers and 73.2 per cent of the fathers had not finished high school, while only 4, or 3.5 per cent of the mothers and 5, or 6.1 per cent of the fathers were college graduates.

Tables V and VI show the occupational status of the parents.

TABLE V. OCCUPATIONAL STATUS OF THE FATHERS

Occupation	Number	Per Cent
Farming	51	72.9
Professional	4	5.7
Common labor	15	21.4

According to Table V one may see that the Number One occupation of the fathers was farming, which claimed 72.9 per cent of the group represented. Common labor represented 21.4 per cent, and professional services represented only 5.7 per cent of the group.

TABLE VI. OCCUPATIONAL STATUS OF MOTHERS

Occupation	Number	Per Cent
Housewives	65	74.7
Domestic and Personal Services	15	17.2
Professional Services	5	5.8
W. P. A.	2	2.3

Seventy-four and seven-tenths per cent of the mothers were housewives; seventeen and two-tenths per cent were employed in domestic and personal services; five and eight-tenths per cent represented professional service, and two and three-tenths per cent had W. P. A. jobs.

Table VII shows the distribution of automobiles by places studied.

TABLE VII. OWNERSHIP OF AUTOMOBILES BY PLACES STUDIED

Place	With Automobile (Per Cent)	Without Automobile (Per Cent)
Brookshire	30.3	69.7
Sunnyside	31.5	68.5
Hempstead	43.4	56.6

Sixty-nine and seven-tenths per cent of the parents in Brookshire were without automobiles; sixty-eight and five-tenths per cent in Sunnyside, and 56.6 per cent were without automobiles in Hempstead.

Table VIII shows the distribution of radios, pianos, and phonographs in the homes by places studied.

TABLE VIII. THE DISTRIBUTION OF MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS BY PLACES STUDIED

Instruments	Brookshire	Sunnyside	Hempstead
	Number	Number	Number
Pianos	6	3	5
Phonographs	12	8	10
Radios	7	2	5

According to the above table, it is clearly seen that there were few musical instruments in the homes.



### CHAPTER III

#### THE ECONOMIC AND OCCUPATIONAL STATUS

Even though most young people do not work outside the home, all usually have some chores that they perform around the home and farm. While some are paid for these tasks, others perform them as a matter of home responsibilities. Some receive regular allowances, not as payment for work, but as a source of spending change.

A small group of young people have obtained work outside the home. Some assist in supporting their families, while others spend their wages for their own needs. All of these young people do not maintain regular jobs throughout the year. The money is spent for various items as school supplies, recreational activities, clothes, food, and other necessities. Some spend their money as they wish and others follow the advice of their parents.

Table IX shows young people working outside home for pay, by places studied.

TABLE IX. YOUNG PEOPLE WORKING OUTSIDE THE HOME  
FOR PAY BY PLACES STUDIED

Places	Those Working	Those Not Working	Not Stated	Per Cent Working	Per Cent Not Working	Per Cent Not Stated
Brookshire	14	17	2	42.4	51.2	6.4
Sunnyside	8	13	-	38.0	62.0	-
Hempstead	17	27	4	35.5	56.2	8.3

These young people are engaged in such jobs as farm hands, garage attendants, cafe workers, domestic servants, and other similar jobs. They worked at these jobs after school in the afternoon and on Saturday. Three worked on the N. Y. A. in Hempstead and two in Brookshire.

Those reporting jobs outside the home were paid wages from one to five dollars per week as is shown in Table X.

TABLE X. WAGES PAID FOR WORK OUTSIDE THE HOME  
AND THE NUMBER OF PERSONS RECEIVING THOSE WAGES

Weekly Wages	Persons Receiving Wages
One Dollar	8
Two Dollars	1
Three Dollars	4
Four Dollars	1
Five Dollars	7

All of the young people who reported jobs outside the home did not designate the type of work nor the wages they received.

Table XI shows the number of young people who contribute a part of their wages to the family.

TABLE XI. YOUNG PEOPLE WHO CONTRIBUTE A PART OF  
THEIR WAGES TO THE FAMILY

Places	Number Contributing To Family	Number not Contributing To Family
Brookshire	5	9
Sunnyside	6	2
Hempstead	11	8

These young people spent their money for various purposes. Some contributed to their families while others spent all of their wages for personal needs.

Table XII indicates how the young people spent their money.

TABLE XII. MONEY SPENT ACCORDING TO INDIVIDUAL WISHES  
AND ACCORDING TO THE WISHES OF PARENTS

Places	Number According to Wishes of Parents	Number According to Individual Wishes
Brookshire	17	7
Sunnyside	11	5
Hempstead	10	11

There were 38 young people who spent their money according to the wishes of their parents, and 23 according to individual wishes.

A large portion of these young people do not work outside the home but have duties to perform in the home. These duties include

dishwashing, house cleaning, cooking and sewing for the girls, and farm work, wood cutting and gardening for the boys. Only in eight cases was payment for this work reported, otherwise it was considered their contribution to the household. This group is dependent upon their parents for spending money. Some receive regular allowances, while others had no definite source of income.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE EDUCATIONAL STATUS

All of these young people were in high school and apparently enjoying their school life. With the exception of Sunnyside, the high schools offered four-year courses. Sunnyside had only a three-year course, however, they were hopeful of obtaining the fourth year for the session 1939-40.

#### Hempstead

Probably the best school in the county from the standpoint of equipment and teaching force is the high school in Hempstead, which is the largest of the three. Several schools have been consolidated into the district and it has students from the open country as well as the immediate village. Vocational training is offered in Home Economics and Agriculture. The school is used as a laboratory school by Prairie View State College for the training of teachers in Agriculture, Home Economics, and in literary subjects.

The students in the high school at Hempstead were distributed according to the grades, as shown in Table XIII.

TABLE XIII. THE DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS ACCORDING TO GRADES

Grade	Number	Per Cent
Eighth	1	2.1
Ninth	19	39.1
Tenth	9	19.4
Eleventh	18	39.1

Thirty-nine and one-tenth per cent of the students were in the ninth grade, and 39.1 per cent were in the eleventh grade. Nineteen and four-tenths per cent were in the tenth grade. Only one student was in the eighth grade because the majority of the students in the eighth grade did not fall within the age group studied.

In reply to the question, "do you enjoy school?" all answered in the affirmative. Favorite studies of these students were English, Mathematics, History, and Home Economics.

In addition to the regular school routine, this high school had a diversity of extra-curricular activities. Such activities include football, basketball, track, debating, and music. The school had won pennants from participation in the State Inter-scholastic League meeting. Several students had won individual medals in the same meeting, These medals were won in such contests

as debating, quartet singing, track and field events. Thirteen students reported not participating in any form of extra activity. Athletics proved the Number One activity, as 67.3 per cent of the students participated in track, football or basketball.

Since the school is a Vocational Agricultural school, local chapters of the New Farmers of America and the New Homemakers of Texas are found there. The activities of these clubs are complementary to the classes in Home Economics and Agriculture. These clubs promoted better living conditions in the home and on the farm.

This school has a small library which supplies an outside source of reading material. It is in need of more books, particularly juvenile fiction.

The boys and girls were asked to name improvements they would like to make in the school. Among the desired improvements were: more books in the library, more athletic equipment, a music teacher and department, more home economic equipment, and the addition of a gymnasium.

Table XIV shows the classification of changes and improvements and the Per cent of students desiring these changes.

TABLE XIV. IMPROVEMENTS DESIRED IN SCHOOL

Classification	Per Cent
More library books	31.5
More teachers	15.8
More athletic equipment	15.8
More Home Economics equipment	10.5
Campus beautification	10.5
Music Department	5.2

Thirty-one and five-tenths per cent of the students desired more library books, while 15.8 per cent desired more teachers, and 15.8 per cent desired more athletic equipment. Ten and five-tenths per cent desired more Home Economics equipment, 10.5 per cent desired campus beautification, and 5.2 per cent desired a music department.

With the exception of two boys who wished to join the Navy, all other students expressed a desire to attend college after high school. Prairie View State College was their unanimous preference.

Occupations they desired were: school teaching, beauty parlor operators, music teachers, nurses, and farmers.



Table XV shows the classification of occupations desired by these young people.

TABLE XV. OCCUPATIONS DESIRED

Classification	Number	Per Cent
School teachers	6	17.6
Nurses	5	14.7
Music teachers	4	11.7
Beauty parlor operators	4	11.7
Garage mechanics	4	11.7
Farmers	3	8.8
Navy	2	5.8
Barbers	1	2.9
Other types of work <sup>1</sup>	5	14.7

School teaching was the Number One choice of occupations, as 17.6 per cent of the students wished to follow this occupation upon finishing college; nurse training was the next highest with 14.7 per cent; 11.7 per cent wanted to become music teachers, 11.7 per cent beauty parlor operators, and 11.7 per cent garage mechanics. Farming was one of the lowest ranking choices, 8.8 per cent, even though many of the boys and girls live on farms.

<sup>1</sup>Other types of work include carpenters, truck drivers, typists and business operators.

Brookshire

Even though the school is located in the village, most of the students in the Brookshire school come from farm families; for the village has a population of only 500 inhabitants. The school has six teachers and eleven grades. There are no Home Economics and Agricultural Departments. There was no library found in this school. The students are distributed according to the eighth, ninth, tenth, and eleventh grades, as shown in Table XVI.

TABLE XVI. THE DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS BY GRADES

Grade	Number	Per Cent
Eighth	12	36.3
Ninth	9	27.2
Tenth	8	24.2
Eleventh	4	12.1

The majority, or 36.3 per cent of the students were in the eighth grade, with 27.2 per cent in the ninth, 24.2 per cent in the tenth, and only 12.1 per cent in the eleventh grade, which gives evidence of a dropping out of school from year to year.

Extra-curricular activities of the school were limited to basketball, softball, and a sewing club. Fourteen students indicated that they participated in no form of extra-curricular

activity, while 19 participated either in softball, basketball, or were members of the sewing club. There was no playground equipment on the campus, nor were there any school organizations, as the New Farmers of America.

All of these young people enjoyed going to school but wanted to make such improvements as a new building, more teachers, a music department, a home economics department, and playground and athletic equipment.

Only four students indicated that they did not plan to attend college. Their reasons were a lack of money, therefore, they would be unable to attend. Prairie View State College was the choice of the group planning to attend. The proximity of the school to their homes was the general reason given for the selection of this college. The students wanted such occupations as school teachers, music teachers, farmers, and other occupations, as shown in Table XVII.

TABLE XVII. OCCUPATIONS DESIRED

Classification	Number	Per Cent
School teachers	5	23.8
Farming	3	14.4
Beauty parlor operators	3	14.4
Barbers	2	9.9
Music teachers	2	9.9
Other occupations <sup>1</sup>	6	28.5

<sup>1</sup>Other occupations included carpenters, business operators, and Government workers.

Twenty-three and eight-tenths per cent wanted to become school teachers, 14.4 per cent farmers and 14.4 per cent beauty parlor operators; nine and nine-tenths per cent wanted to become barbers and 9.9 per cent music teachers. Twenty-eight and five-tenths per cent were interested in other occupations.

### Sunnyside

Sunnyside is the smallest of the three schools studied. It is in an open country community of 100 inhabitants. The school has five teachers and three high school grades: the eighth, ninth, and tenth. The school has a Home Economics Department but no Agricultural Department. Neither is there a library. All of the children come from farm families.

Table XVIII shows the distribution of these students by grades.

TABLE XVIII. THE DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS BY GRADES

Grade	Number	Per Cent
Eighth	10	47.6
Ninth	6	28.5
Tenth	5	23.8

Forty-seven and six-tenths per cent of these young people were in the eighth grade; 28.5 per cent were in the ninth grade, and 23.8 per cent were in the tenth grade. Almost half of the group was in the eighth grade.

The school was active in Interscholastic League activities and had recently won a pennant. Athletics and the Home Economics club were the primary extra-curricular activities. Boys as well as girls were members of the Home Economics club. Only five indicated that they participated in no form of extra-curricular activity.

These students enjoyed school but wanted to make the following improvements: More athletic equipment, a more beautiful campus, and a water system. Only two indicated that they did not plan to attend college. As in Brookshire and Hempstead, Prairie View State College was the choice of the group.

Table XIX shows the occupations desired by this group.

TABLE XIX. OCCUPATIONS DESIRED

Classification	Number	Per Cent
School teacher	7	33.3
No choice	14	66.6

There was not the variation in occupational choices as was found in the other schools. Thirty-three and three-tenths per cent wanted to be school teachers and 66.6 per cent expressed no choice of a future occupation.

## CHAPTER V

### RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

In studying the recreational activities of these young people, differentiations were made between the home, the school, and other agencies in order that one may clearly define the contributions made by these different social organizations.

#### The Church

The church today is probably the most discussed institution in the community. Because of its far-reaching influence it is of primary importance.

#### Hempstead

In Hempstead only twelve people indicated that they did not belong to any church. The others were distributed between the Baptist and Methodist Episcopal churches.

Table XX shows the denominational affiliation of this group.

TABLE XX. DENOMINATIONAL AFFILIATION

Denomination	Number	Per Cent
Baptist	22	45.6
Methodist Episcopal	14	29.1
No Affiliation	12	25.3

The Baptist church was in the majority with 45.6 per cent of the young people belonging to this denomination. Twenty-nine and one-tenth per cent were Methodist Episcopal, and 25.3 per cent were not affiliated with any church.

These young people ranged in age from 8 to 17 years when they joined the church, as is shown in Table XXI.

TABLE XXI. AGE OF YOUTH UPON JOINING THE CHURCH

Age	Number	Per Cent
8 years	1	3.3
10 years	2	6.0
11 years	3	9.0
12 years	7	21.2
13 years	6	18.1
14 years	9	27.2
15 years	2	6.0
17 years	3	9.2

Twenty-one and two-tenths per cent joined the church at the age of twelve; 18.1 per cent at the age of thirteen, and 27.2 per cent at the age of fourteen. The majority, or 66.5 per cent were in this age group when they became affiliated with a church.

Only six belonged to churches different from their parents, otherwise children and parents were members of the same church. Some were influenced by parents, ministers, and friends in their choice of denomination, while others made their own selection.

The eleven o'clock worship service was surprisingly popular among the young people. Seventeen preferred this hour to other services, while twelve liked the B. Y. P. U.; seven preferred the Epworth League, and seven the Sunday School. They were generally active in church work, attending regularly and participating in the routine services as well as special programs. They all stated that they attended church because they liked it and not because of any parental influence. They liked their pastors and approved everything that they preached.

These young people were very orthodox in their religious views. The majority believed it a sin to dance, drink, play cards, and attend baseball games or the motion picture on Sunday. This attitude was rather surprising considering the time in which these young people live. No question was included to determine the extent to which they participated in these activities, therefore, no check can be made on what they think by what they actually do.

Table XXII shows the number of youths who classify certain activities as sin.



TABLE XXII. ACTIVITIES CLASSIFIED AS SIN

Activity	Y E S		N O	
	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent
Dancing	24	54.6	20	45.4
Drinking	29	63.0	17	37.0
Card playing	26	56.5	20	43.5
Attending movies and ball games on Sunday	24	53.5	21	46.5

Fifty-four and six-tenths per cent believed dancing was a sin, 63 per cent believed the same about drinking, 56.5 per cent classified card playing as a sin, and 53.5 per cent thought it a sin to attend baseball games and movies on Sunday.

These young people attended church socials which were sponsored by the B. Y. P. U., Epworth League, Sunday School, and other auxiliary organizations. These socials took the form of lawn parties, picnics, and suppers. They enjoyed these socials but the general comment was that they were not given often enough. Equipment for the playground and more social activities were improvements they wanted to make in the church program.

Brookshire

The young people in Brookshire belonged to the Baptist, Holiness, and A. M. E. denominations. Like Hampstead, the Baptists are in the majority.

Table XXIII shows the denominations to which these young people belong.

TABLE XXIII. DENOMINATIONAL AFFILIATION

Denomination	Number	Per Cent
Baptist	24	72.7
A. M. E.	2	6.1
Holiness	3	9.1
No affiliation	4	12.1

Seventy-two and seven-tenths per cent were Baptists, 6.1 per cent were A. M. E., 9.1 per cent were Holiness, and 12.1 per cent were not affiliated with any church.

These young people were between the ages of 11 and 15 years when they became church members, as is shown in Table XXIV.

TABLE XXIV. AGES OF RURAL YOUTH UPON JOINING THE CHURCH

Age	Number	Per Cent
11 years	5	17.9
12 years	7	25.0
13 years	6	21.5
14 years	9	32.1
15 years	1	3.5

Twenty-five per cent of these young people were twelve years of age when they became church members; 21.5 per cent were thirteen, and 32.1 per cent were fourteen when they became church members. Only 21.4 per cent were outside of this age group when they became church members.

Only three persons belonged to denominations different from their parents. Some of these young people made their own selection of denominations, while others were influenced by parents and ministers. They liked their pastors and approved everything that they preached.

The following table shows their attitude toward dancing, drinking, card playing, and attending movies and ball games on Sunday.

TABLE XXV. ACTIVITIES CLASSIFIED AS SIN

Activities	Y E S		N O	
	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent
Dancing	18	58.0	13	42
Drinking	22	73.3	8	26.7
Card Playing	21	67.7	10	32.3
Attending movies and ball games on Sunday	15	50.0	15	50.0

As in Hempstead, the majority of the boys and girls were very orthodox in their attitudes toward these activities. Fifty-eight per cent considered dancing a sin, 73.3 per cent considered drinking a sin, 67.7 per cent card playing, and 50 per cent considered it a sin to attend movies and ball games on Sunday.

They attended church regularly because they like the services and not because of parental influence. Sunday School and B. Y. P. U. were the preferred services, and only two indicated a preference for the 11:00 o'clock worship hour. These young people attended church socials sponsored by auxiliary organizations. They enjoyed these socials but like the youths in Hempstead, these affairs were to infrequent. The primary purpose of the socials was to raise money for the church. Improvements they wanted to make were more socials at the church.

Sunnyside

There were fewer young people belonging to church in Sunnyside than any other community, as only five out of the twenty-one students studied indicated that they belonged to a church. Unlike Hempstead and Brookshire, the Baptist church was not represented among this group.

Table XXVI shows the denominational affiliation of rural youth at Sunnyside.

TABLE XXVI. DENOMINATIONAL AFFILIATION

Denomination	Number	Per Cent
C. M. E.	5	23.8
Holiness	1	4.8
No affiliation	15	71.4

Twenty-three and eight-tenths per cent were members of the C. M. E. church; 4.8 per cent were Holiness, and 71.4 per cent had no affiliation.

Three of these young people were 14 years of age when they joined the church, one was 13 and one was 12. They were members of the same church as their parents and were influenced by parents and pastors in their choice of denomination. They liked

their pastors, however, two did not approve of some of their pastor's doctrines.

Table XXVII shows their attitude toward dancing, drinking, card playing, and attending motion pictures and ball games on Sunday.

TABLE XXVII. ACTIVITIES CLASSIFIED AS SIN

Activity	Y E S		N O	
	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent
Dancing	9	42.8	12	57.2
Drinking	9	42.8	12	57.2
Card Playing	10	47.6	11	52.4
Attending movies and ball games on Sunday	7	33.3	14	66.7

Forty-two and eight-tenths per cent believed dancing a sin and 42.8 per cent felt the same about drinking. Forty-seven and six-tenths per cent considered card playing a sin and 33.3 per cent felt that attending movies and ball games on Sunday a sin.

This group was less orthodox in their opinion than either of the other groups. This is a rather surprising fact considering that these young people live in an open country neighborhood and have limited contact, while the others live in villages. A smaller number stated that they were interested and active in church work (9 out of 21) and they seemed indifferent toward the church programs. Occasional picnics and church socials were the extent of social life at the church. The children attended these socials. They wanted more social activities sponsored by the church and better music in the church.

From the analysis of the church activities in this study, one may see that the church is doing little toward contributing to social and recreational activities in the community. Young people enjoy the activities sponsored but these activities are too infrequent. More activities would serve to keep the young people interested in the church. The churches in this study have a good opportunity to establish programs of recreation because, as indicated, these young people have very old-fashioned views concerning certain activities and it will not be necessary for the churches to establish anything so streamlined as a dance hall to maintain the interest of these young people.

### The School

The school is probably the most active institution in the community, more so than the home. People look to the school to supplement all that has been left undone by the home, the church, and other social organizations. The recreational activities of the school in this study are rather limited, still it is doing more than any other social organization.

### Hempstead

The high school in Hempstead sponsors dances, parties, picnics, and hikes for the students. These activities are sponsored by classes, school clubs, and the school. All of the young people indicated that they attended and enjoyed these activities. The high school in Hempstead contributes more than any other organization to the social life of the young people. Often the college orchestra from Prairie View State College is engaged to play for dances.

Sixty-three and six-tenths per cent of the young people indicated that they belonged to a school club, and in addition to the intellectual objectives, these clubs gave parties, picnics and hikes for its members. Perhaps the most outstanding group organizations in the school are the New Farmers of America and the New Homemakers of Texas, which are local chapters of a national and state organization. The students were pleased with the activities of the school



but wanted these activities to be given more frequent.

### Brookshire

The recreational activities sponsored by the school in Brookshire were very similar to those in Hempstead. Parties, picnics, and dances were given at the school. Piano music was used at the dances. The sewing club was the most outstanding organization in the school. The objective of social activities in the Brookshire school was to raise money for the school. The students apparently enjoyed these activities but they were too limited. More organizations and more frequent entertainments were needed in the school.

### Sunnyside

Dances were the only form of recreational activities given by the school at Sunnyside. The purpose of these dances was to raise money for the school. These dances were sponsored by the Home Economics and athletic clubs. They were rather infrequent and held for the entire community, rather than for the school children. This makes them rather public. The children in this school wanted more social activities and a variation in activities as picnics, hikes, and parties.

Sunnyside needs a diversity of activities more so than Brookshire or Hempstead, because there is an absence of commercial

recreation. The school, the home, and the church are the only places for social activity.

The role the school is playing in the social life of the young people can be seen from the previous analyses. The activity program at the school in Hempstead is representative, but Brookshire and Sunnyside are in need of more organizations.

### The Home

The most interesting, and certainly the most important social center is the home, however, every home is not a social center. If this were the case, there would be no need of establishing social centers at the school and the church.

The action of the young people in the home and outside of the home was limited by their parents. These limitations were in the form of restrictions. The girls and boys had more restrictions from the mother than from the father, indicating that the mother was the main disciplinarian in the home. These restrictions included such items as: attending the movies on Sunday, playing cards, attending the cafes (which were questionable in character), late hours in town, associating with the wrong people (bad company), attending dances, and participating in school athletics.

The mother and father were not always in harmony with these restrictions, for the mother often approved activities which the father disapproved, however, in the majority of cases they were agreeable. These boys and girls stated that if given a chance they would participate in those activities which had been forbidden by the parents.

Except for eight cases, all of these young people had a number of pals. Their parents approved of their choice of friends and made them welcome in the home. Only 11 girls indicated

that they did not maintain a boy friend, while 37 did. Of these 37 with boy friends, 20 indicated that the young men were permitted to call on them in the home, while 17 were not permitted to "receive company" by their parents, even though they were fifteen years of age and over.

Thirty-one young people indicated that they were permitted to dance in the home and 41 were not; 25 could play cards while 46 could not. The parents were a little more liberal concerning the giving of parties, for 35 indicated that they could give parties, while 21 could not. It is clearly seen that at many of these parties the young people do not dance or play cards.

Only 28 homes were meeting places for the "gang". On such occasions the group danced, played games, played the piano and phonograph, and listened to the radio. Those homes with musical instruments and liberal parents proved favorites of the group. Forty-three visited their friends at least once per week, others less often.

The parents of these boys and girls led rather limited social lives. Canning clubs, church organizations, and visiting were their only forms of social participation. Thus, one can see why the activities of the children are so limited.

Commercial Agencies and Other Organizations

Commercial recreation includes motion picture theatres, dance halls, pool rooms, and cafes which people must pay to attend.

Like other agencies, commercial recreation too is limited in Waller County. There is only one motion picture house in the entire county and it is located at Hempstead. It is a modern building with a generally good program. Western pictures are always shown on Saturday, and young people in the Hempstead community attend the pictures at least once per week.

In addition to the theatre, there are cafes, pool rooms, and beer parlors, all with questionable characters. Because these places are undesirable, many young people are not permitted to patronize them - only eleven out of forty-eight. The places are equipped with nickel victrolas, which is a source of music for dancing. Cards and dominos are also played in these places. They are dirty and dingy and offer a hangout for the idle.

There is no motion picture house in Brookshire, but there is a cafe, a dance hall, and a pool room. Only ten persons indicated that they patronized these places. The types of entertainment offered were: dancing, card playing and pool. These places were questionable in character and considered the wrong place for certain people to be seen. The young people in Brookshire attended the motion picture once and twice per month.

Sunnyside had no commercial recreation, and except for an occasional carnival, this was the extent of commercial recreation in Waller County.

#### Other Agencies

In each of these communities picnics were given and baseball was played. Except for community fairs in the fall, these were the only contributions made by the community for social life.

There is a County Home Demonstration Agent, and also a Farm Agent in the county, and they have organized 4-H clubs at each of these schools. In addition to their club work, parties are also given by this group. The 4-H clubs were the only out-of-school organizations to which the young people belong.

Wishes and Desires of Rural Youth

These young people were very conscious of their limitations and expressed very freely the things they would like to do.

1. They wanted more clothes
2. They wanted more spending money
3. They wanted more places to go.

These were their three primary wishes. Other things that they would like to possess are: radios, automobiles, and nice homes. They wanted to give more parties and picnics, go on hikes, attend the motion pictures more often, and go riding on Sunday afternoon. The following are statements made by these young people:

"I would like to have more clothes and money to spend, subscribe to the Hollywood Photoplay Magazine. I would like more cosmetics, attend the movies every time the picture changed, attend more enjoyable parties, visit other places and schools, and learn to swim."

"I would really like to have more clothes like the college boys wear, but if I could get a good job, I feel that I could get the clothes."

"I would like to have more clothes, more money to spend, and more decent places to go besides the school house and the church. I would like to attend the movies more often and do club work with other girls."

"I disagree with my pastor when he says that dancing is a sin."

"If I had the opportunity, I would attend the cafes and pool rooms. There is no other place to go in a town the size of this."

"I would rather live in a city so I would have some place to go."

These statements are typical of those made by the group, for their lives were very uneventful. They had from one to four hours of leisure per day during which time they read, worked in the flowers, sewed or visited. Every individual indicated that he liked to read. However, their favorite books were those which contained fairy tales and their favorite magazines were True Stories, True Confessions and Love Stories. The group read very few books. They preferred Western pictures and their favorite stars were: Tyrone Powers, Shirley Temple, Bill Robinson, and Gene Autrey. They liked "swing" music and Louis Armstrong was their favorite orchestra conductor.



CHAPTER VI  
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

From this study the following discoveries were made concerning rural youth in Waller County:

1. The father is a farmer with less than a high school education.
2. The mother is a housewife with less than a high school education.
3. The education of the children exceeds that of the parents.
4. These young people live on a farm or in a small village in a five-room house.
5. The number of automobiles, radios, pianos, or victrolas owned by the families is negligible.
6. Thirty-nine young people worked outside the home and received wages of from one to five dollars per week.
7. Twenty-six of these individuals contributed a part of their wages to their parents.
8. These young people were interested in such occupations as school teachers, nurses, music teachers, farmers, and barbers.
9. Only 31 out of the entire group were not affiliated with a church. Others were Baptist, C. M. E., A. M. E., M. E., and Holiness.

10. The majority of these young people believed that dancing, drinking, card playing, and attending motion pictures and ball games on Sunday were sins.

11. The church's contribution to recreational life is an occasional lawn social, picnic, or box supper to raise money for the church.

12. The school contributes parties, dances, picnics, and hikes, which are too infrequent.

13. The average parents do not permit their children to dance and play cards in the home, but they may give parties.

14. The young men were not permitted to call on the young ladies in the majority of cases.

15. The recreational life of the parents is limited, therefore, they attempt to limit their children.

16. The only unquestionable place of commercial recreation in the county is the motion picture theatre in Hempstead. Local cafes, pool rooms, and beer parlors are not of the best type.

17. Communities limited their activities to an occasional ball game and an annual picnic.

18. The three main wishes of these youths were: more clothes, more spending money, and more places to go.

## SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the recreational activities of rural youth discussed in this thesis, the following suggestions and recommendations are offered:

1. That the parents be made conscious of the inadequate facilities of the home and social organizations.
2. That through the P. T. A. or some other organization, the parents be given some information for providing more adequate recreational activities in the home.
3. That the home be equipped with musical instruments which will be a source of individual or group activity.
4. That the parents encourage the giving of parties in the home with small groups, and in those homes where dancing and card playing are taboo, supplement some other activities of interest.
5. That social organizations enlarge their program of activity to make for a more diversified program and more frequent activities.
6. That leaders in recreational activities be trained so that their efforts may be more effective.
7. That young people be taught in the home, school, and church to provide recreation for themselves in the absence of commercial and organizational recreation.

8. That parents participate in recreational activities so that they will understand the desires of the children.

9. That communal libraries be established at some center in the community, as the school, for the use of the community.

10. That music be added to the curriculum of each school.

## A P P E N D I X

### CASE STUDIES OF RURAL YOUTH

Jerry C. is sixteen years of age. He lives on a farm with his parents and is the youngest of seven children. Both parents are high school graduates and his father is employed as a carpenter. His mother is a housekeeper. His parents own their home and a car.

He usually agrees with his father and mother and has few restrictions from either. His parents always agree as to his activities, hence, there is no friction between the two.

Jerry attends the Sam Schwarz High School in Hempstead, going in by bus every day. He is in the ninth grade and his favorite studies are history and algebra. He participates in athletics, being a member of the football and basketball teams. Upon finishing high school, Jerry plans to attend Prairie View State College. He selected Prairie View because it is near his home. He would like to be a carpenter like his father.

He does not work while attending school. At home he performs such duties as feeding the hogs and working the garden for which he is paid seventy-five cents per week. He likes living on a farm.

He is a member of the Mt. Corinth Baptist Church in Hempstead and joined when 14 years of age. He is active in church work and attends every Sunday. Jerry prefers the B. Y. P. U. to other church services. He does not believe it is a sin to dance, play cards, drink, or attend movies on Sunday.

He attends the movies once per week, on Saturday, and prefers Western pictures. He is permitted to patronize the village cafes and pool halls where he enjoys dancing on Saturday night. He is permitted to use the family car and goes to town about twice per week. He has a girl-friend but is not permitted to call on her, therefore, he sees her at the picture show, at school, and in town. Jerry does most of the things he likes and is satisfied with his present existence.

### Case 2

Helen lives in Brookshire with her parents. She has two sisters, one in college, and two brothers. Her mother is a school teacher and her father is a farmer.

She always agrees with her parents and has few restrictions. She is taught to be a little better than other girls in the village and to aspire for high ideals. She would like to become a member of a nice club so that she could go on hikes, picnics, and parties, and do regular club work.

Helen attends the local school and her favorite studies are History and English. She is 16 years of age and in the tenth grade. Membership in the sewing club is her only extra-curricular activity. She plans to attend Prairie View State College and study Physical Education. She selected Prairie View because it is outstanding and offers what she wants.

Helen assists her mother with the housework and does not work outside the home. She is a member of the Baptist church and her choice of denomination was influenced by her father. She likes church and is active as an usher. The church sponsors box suppers, rallies, and holiday programs for the young people. She prefers the B. Y. P. U. to other services and does not believe it a sin to dance, drink, play cards, or attend movies or ball games on Sunday.

Helen does not have many pals because she is the teacher's daughter and must be careful of her associates. She does not have a boy-friend because there are no boys in the village nice enough for her to go with. There is no motion picture house in the village for her to patronize. She does not go near the dance halls, cafes, and pool rooms. She is permitted to dance and give parties in her home, but she is not allowed to play cards. She likes swing music.

Helen seldom visits any one, but her few select friends often come to her home and they play the radio and visit. In her

leisure time she reads and rests. She would like to participate in more recreational activities but because of the limited number of people in the village with whom she may associate, she remains at home. For this reason, Helen is considered a "snob" by other girls in the village.



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